United Nations S/PV.8346

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8346th meeting
Monday, 10 September 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Corruption and conflict

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-28029 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Corruption and conflict

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. John Prendergast, founding Director of the Enough Project and co-founder of The Sentry, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United States presidency of the Security Council for organizing this briefing, which reflects a recognition of the importance of tackling corruption as part of our efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Corruption is present in all countries, rich and poor, North and South, developed and developing. Numbers show the startling scope of the challenge. The World Economic Forum estimates that the cost of corruption is at least $2.6 trillion, or 5 per cent, of global gross domestic product. According to the World Bank, businesses and individuals pay more than $1 trillion in bribes each year.

Corruption robs schools, hospitals and others of vitally needed funds. It rots institutions, as public officials enrich themselves or turn a blind eye to criminality. It deprives people of their rights, drives away foreign investment and despoils the environment. Corruption breeds disillusion with Government and governance and is often at the root of political dysfunction and societal disunity. The poor and vulnerable suffer disproportionately, and impunity compounds the problem.

Corruption can be a trigger for conflict. As conflict rages, corruption prospers. Even if conflict ebbs, corruption can impede recovery. Corruption drives and thrives on the breakdown of political and social institutions. Those institutions are never more in crisis than in times of conflict. Corruption is linked to many forms of instability and violence, such as the illicit trafficking in arms, drugs and people.

The connections among corruption, terrorism and violent extremism have been repeatedly recognized by the Security Council and the General Assembly. Assets stolen through corruption can be used to finance further crimes, including violent extremist and terrorist acts.

Large-scale corruption surveys conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that bribery of public officials was particularly high in areas affected by conflict. In conflict situations, stakeholders such as anti-corruption commissions, civil society and the media may be weakened or hindered in their essential work.

The consequences of corruption in times of conflict can be especially devastating, as they can affect the most basic needs and exacerbate hunger and poverty.

Member States must be on the front lines in the fight against corruption. It is especially important to build up the capacity of national anti-corruption commissions and prosecutorial efforts. Governments can also enhance anti-corruption efforts by ensuring independent judiciaries, a vibrant civil society, freedom of the media and effective whistle-blower protections. The international community can complement those efforts by working more effectively against money laundering, tax evasion and the illicit financial flows that deprive countries of much-needed resources and fuel further corruption.

As members of the Council know, I have called for heightened efforts to prevent conflict and to address risks early, before they escalate. In that spirit, combating corruption and addressing governance challenges, which lie at the root of many conflicts, must be a component of preventive approaches. This is an opportunity to build a solid foundation of trust and accountability and increase a society's resilience to crisis.

In peace operations, our engagement should be designed and implemented with a clearer anti-corruption lens to reinforce a culture of accountability and respect for the rule of law. At its January Summit this year, the African Union launched the observance of 2018 as African Anti-Corruption Year. I am pleased to note that anti-money laundering efforts in Nigeria and Tunisia have seen funds returned.

As I said to the General Assembly in May in marking the fifteenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the role of the United Nations is crucial. There are several ways the Organization can support Member States, from sharing good practices to supporting efforts to strengthen national anti-corruption institutions. The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala is a case in point.

Before the adoption of the Convention, there was no global instrument to criminalize corruption or to recover stolen proceeds. Now the Convention has 186 States parties and the crime of corruption is on the books of nearly every country in the world. The Convention's robust peer review mechanisms have served as a global framework for international cooperation to strengthen prevention, disrupt money-laundering schemes, return stolen proceeds from foreign banks and other necessary actions. I encourage all Member States to bring greater resolve to its implementation.

Let us also take profit of advances of technology, which give us an opportunity to massively expand public participation in governance and to increase accountability. At the same time, we know that conventions and legal measures must be complemented by strong leadership that elevates corruption as a concern and makes it a priority for action.

People across the world continue to express outrage at the corruption of their leaders and at how deeply corruption is embedded in societies. They are rightly calling for political establishments to operate with transparency and accountability or to make way for those who will. I call on leaders everywhere to listen, to nurture a culture of integrity and to empower citizens to do their part at the grass-roots level. We must all do more to fight corruption, strengthen governance and build trustworthy institutions that can ensure probity and progress for all.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Prendergast.

Mr. Prendergast: Throughout history, war may have been hell, but for small groups of conflict profiteers it has also been very lucrative. Today's deadliest conflicts in Africa — such as those in South Sudan, Somalia, northern Nigeria, the Sudan, the Central African Republic and, perhaps most importantly, the Democratic Republic of Congo — are sustained by extraordinary opportunities for illicit self-enrichment that emerge in war economies, where there is a visible nexus between grand corruption and mass atrocities. State armies and rebels use extreme violence to control natural resources, labour and smuggling networks, including those trafficking in wildlife. Violence becomes self-financing from pillaging, natural-resource looting and stealing State assets, with banking and business connections that extend from right here in New York to London, Dubai and many other global financial centres.

In these hijacked African States, the dynamics of which are certainly similar to those in other war-torn countries around the world, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, military and civilian leaders use networks of commercial collaborators and financiers from inside and outside their countries to enrich themselves, to benefit the commercial and political networks, and usually to maintain an iron grip on power. Arms dealers, ivory traffickers, gold and diamond smugglers, minerals dealers, oil companies, construction firms and others collude with Government officials and rebel warlords — as well as, at times, with terrorist networks — to maximize profit for a narrow few. Technically savvy and skilled at exploiting legitimate systems of finance, trade and transport — utilizing money-laundering, regulatory and sanctions evasion, disguised beneficial ownership, the diversion of State resources and assets, security sector fraud, and offshoring assets — these networks have remained largely untouched by law enforcement, regulation or international sanctions imposed by this organ or others.

At their core, these conflicts are battles over the control of hijacked States and the natural resources that enrich the countries involved. Control of the State is the surest way to access these resources. Diverting State budgets into the military and internal security — the primary means of violently suppressing dissent — is how to secure them.

Until the Security Council and other interested parties with potential influence can create leverage to change these dynamics, the bottom line is that war will remain more beneficial than peace for those at the centre of conflict and corruption. The same people benefiting from war economies are often the power-brokers in peace talks and have limited incentive — in fact, sometimes no incentive — to reach and implement

a negotiated settlement, especially if adhering to such an agreement means losing out economically.

Therefore, peace efforts require an emphasis on conflict transformation, where war economies must be dismantled and hijacked State institutions, which have often been predatory dating back to the colonial period, must be completely reformed to fulfil their intended purpose. This is even more difficult in countries where natural resources have provided huge opportunities for plunder and corruption to people all over the world.

Remarkably, and regrettably, there is currently no coordinated strategy to disrupt the illicit siphoning of money by leaders and their foreign business partners, or to break the link between corruption and conflict. Every year, billions of aid dollars pour into Africa to clean up these horrific messes. United Nations agencies, taxpayers and donor Governments around the world fund peacekeeping forces, State-building programmes, humanitarian assistance, elections and peace processes, but none of this support has been able to keep corrupt leaders and their network of beneficiaries from stealing billions of dollars because the diplomats leading these efforts simply have no leverage to change the systems that perpetuate conflict. This is not about regime change. It is about system change.

For years, the tool of choice for building leverage against actors undermining peace or human rights has been to impose targeted sanctions. But the sanctions often imposed by this organ and many Member States in these situations, especially in Africa, have been inadequate. Too few individuals are sanctioned too infrequently. The sanctions are often too weak, because the mandate does not exist to target those responsible for the corruption that leads to conflict. In other words, we rarely sanction those at the centre of the networks responsible for greed-fueled extreme violence and their commercial collaborators. Over time, and in the absence of meaningful enforcement, warring parties have come to regard these kinds of erratically applied, one-off sanctions as a vague annoyance for their public relations rather than as a serious threat to their power.

What is missing is the use of policy tools of financial pressures that actually alter the cost-benefit analysis of those committing atrocities and prolonging war. As is obvious, these leaders and their commercial collaborators do not keep their money under the mattress; rather, they launder it through the international financial system and move it offshore into real estate, shell or front companies, and bank accounts. That makes them vulnerable. As a result, the leverage must be laser-focused on going after this specific illicit activity, valued in the billions of dollars. If that activity is disrupted and the vulnerabilities of these kleptocratic networks are exposed and attacked, only then will United Nations envoys and other diplomats be in a position to actually make progress towards brokering and supporting the implementation of peace agreements that lead to lasting peace and that benefit long-suffering populations.

The policy tools available to the Security Council and other interested parties are threefold: first, a network-focused approach to sanctions that focuses on grand corruption; secondly, anti-money-laundering measures that focus on the illicit movement of money through the international financial system; and thirdly, as the Secretary-General said, prosecutions that, in this case, focus on financial crimes associated with atrocities.

Let us go to the first one. Sanctions must be levied against entire networks, not just individuals. That is the approach that the Security Council and others took to propel Iran and North Korea to the negotiating table. Sanctions that target networks in this way are powerful tools for changing behaviour and pressuring individuals to compromise. These network sanctions work because they affect not only the primary target of the sanctions themselves, but also the individuals and companies that play an important role in supporting the targets' activities. By sanctioning the individuals and entities all at once or in close succession, and ensuring robust enforcement, which is key, the primary target's network does not have enough time to recover from the financial impact of being cut off from the global financial system.

To implement this, the Council should add "corruption tied to conflict" as a sanctions criterion to its existing sanctions programmes and ensure that panels of experts are mandated to report on corruption related to conflict. Panels of experts must be provided with the support they need to do this work, which includes ensuring accountability for those responsible for the tragic deaths of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán.

Secondly, the Council should enhance its engagement with anti-money-laundering bodies, such as the Financial Action Task Force and similar regional bodies, and ensure that sanctions regimes

include references to the importance of combatting the laundering of corruption proceeds. These organizations need the help of the Security Council to bolster their work.

An important component of any effort to strengthen the Security Council's ability to counter corrupt activities that fuel conflict more effective is to move beyond working with Governments alone. The Council could enhance its leverage considerably by expanding its outreach and engagement with banks and other financial institutions to counter corruption-fueled conflict. Certain elements of the private sector could them become allies in support of these objectives.

Thirdly and finally, courts must have the mandate to prosecute financial crimes, particularly those rooted in corruption, when connected to conflict and atrocities. The International Criminal Court and other courts of special jurisdiction, such as the Special Criminal Court for the Central African Republic or the Hybrid Court in South Sudan, must have the authority to prosecute these financial crimes.

Ultimately, these tools of financial pressure are not an end in themselves, but should be deployed, as the Secretary-General said today, in the context of a comprehensive strategy that intensifies diplomacy, supports Government institutions of accountability and transparency, and gives space to civil society efforts to promote human rights and reconciliation. As it stands now — and this is the kicker — war crimes pay. In order for peace to have any chance, those benefiting from the human misery wrought by conflicts around the world need to pay a price, whether financial, legal or political, and the corrupt systems that underlie them need to be ended.

I thank you, Madam President, for inviting me to speak today and for bringing attention to this critical issue. I also thank all Security Council members for considering a more robust action plan for countering the corruption-fueled conflict that is destroying the lives of millions of people around the world today.

The President: I thank Mr. Prendergast for his statement.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Secretary-General Guterres for being here today and shining a light on the link between corruption and international peace and security.

I also thank John Prendergast for telling us about the important work his team does to uncover the ways that corruption fuels conflict and for giving us clear recommendations on what we can do to stop it.

I thank everyone for being here for this, the first Security Council meeting on the relationship between corruption and conflict. This is an issue that has for too long gone unaddressed. For all the time we spend here discussing conflict, we hardly ever talk about how corruption fuels the instability, violence and criminal activity that put countries on our agenda. We pour billions and billions of dollars into trying to fix these problems. We deploy Blue Helmets. We set up massive assistance missions. We send experts to all corners of the globe. But we fail to recognize the issue that is staring us in the face — corruption.

At its core, corruption is the transfer of wealth from the powerless to the powerful. Bribes, insider deals, the skimming of public funds and the diversion of humanitarian aid — these are all forms of the involuntary tribute the poorest pay to the powerful and corrupt regimes. When the weight of this burden becomes too much for the people to endure, they inevitably react. Corruption also allows transnational crime and drug trafficking to flourish, threatening the health and safety of all of us. The resulting instability and outflows of desperate people demonstrate that corruption is not just an internal matter; it is a regional and global concern for all of us.

On 17 December 2010, a humble Tunisian fruit seller sat down in front of the local governor's office, dowsed himself in paint thinner and set himself on fire. Mohamed Bouazizi's desperate act set off the Arab Spring and made him the face of protest against authoritarian Governments. What is often lost in his story is that Mohamed was driven to publicly and painfully kill himself by corruption. Like other poor street vendors in Tunisia, Mohamed was routinely harassed by officials seeking bribes. Hours before his suicide, he had experienced yet another humiliating shakedown by a local police officer. Perhaps hoping that others would understand his plight, Mohamed committed one final act of protest against the system that was robbing him not only of his livelihood but of his dignity.

Mohamed's action sparked a wave of anti-corruption uprising across the Arab world. Governments that had appeared stable for decades fell within weeks. In

Yemen, Syria and Libya, protest quickly spiraled into conflicts as corrupt leaders and their cronies tried to hang on to power. All of this unrest eventually found its way to the Security Council's agenda. In fact, nine out of the ten countries that Transparency International considers to be the most corrupt in the world are on the Security Council agenda — nine out of ten. But instead of reflecting on why this is the case, the United Nations is too often willing to ignore corruption. We fear that addressing it will put off Governments and shut off cooperation, or we regard corruption as just the cost of doing business in some countries.

But this head-in-the-sand approach is backwards. In the most troubled countries in the world, corruption is not simply part of the system; corruption is the system. Governments in places like Venezuela and Iran do not exist to serve their people and happen to do a little corruption on the side; they exist to serve their own interests and corruption is the means by which they do so.

The fact is that corrupt regimes cannot be ignored, wished away or dealt with quietly or with whispers. If the Security Council is going to deliver on its commitment to peace and security, corruption must be addressed. Examples of corruption leading to conflict are all around us. The estimates of how much the corrupt Government of Viktor Yanukovych stole from the Ukrainian people run as high as $100 billion over the course of less than four years. His lavish lifestyle was legendary and greatly resented by the Ukrainian people. And when Yanukovych was eventually ousted for his crimes, the ripple effects were global. Russia occupied Crimea and began the most serious confrontation between Moscow and the West since the Cold War.

Corruption also fuels terrorist movements. Citizens who watch Government insiders get rich by stealing resources or demanding brides are ripe for recruitment by terrorists. Boko Haram gained power and support in Nigeria largely in opposition to Government corruption and oppression. The first targets of its violent attacks were the police stations that housed Nigeria's notoriously corrupt and abusive police force. And as Boko Haram carried out barbaric attacks that killed thousands, Nigeria's leaders stole countless amounts of money to defeat terrorism. Since then, Nigeria has taken real steps towards reform, and we commend the Government for recognizing the need for change.

Corruption sustains and prolongs conflict. The ethnic divisions in South Sudan are real, but the driving source of the conflict is a fight over who will control South Sudan's oil revenues, as we heard earlier today. Until there is a way to transparently distribute natural resources in a way that is seen as fair by the South Sudanese people, the civil war will go on. Elsewhere in Africa, groups exploit natural resources, even trafficking in wildlife to pay for war.

Corruption is also an international problem because looted funds are laundered through the global financial system. More than any other country, the United States has taken action to stop this. Through the Kleptocracy Initiative, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, we have shut down corrupt actors involved in drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and money-laundering.

In countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nicaragua and Venezuela, where corruption has fuelled conflict or prevented its resolution, the United States Treasury has levelled significant sanctions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Treasury used the Global Magnitsky authority to sanction businessman Dan Gertler, one associated individual and 33 entities for corruption related to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In Venezuela, the United States Treasury has imposed targeted sanctions on Government officials to stop them from moving their stolen assets in the international financial system. And we have gone the extra mile to ensure that our sanctions are aimed directly at the Maduro regime and not at the Venezuelan people. Later today, the United States will host an Arria Formula meeting that will focus specifically on the toll that corruption in Venezuela has taken on its people and how it threatens international security. We welcome all Member States to join us at the meeting.

Last year during the United States presidency, we demonstrated that human rights is an issue of peace and security. This year, we make the same argument for the Council's time and attention on the issue of corruption. By the time a person like Mohamed Bouazizi is moved to lash out against his oppressors, it is too late to prevent corruption from becoming a full-fledged threat to international peace and security.

To those of my colleagues who are serious about fulfilling their duties as members of the Security

Council, I urge that we take a longer view. If we fail to take seriously the issue of corruption now, we will doom ourselves to deal with the violence it creates in the future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I want to thank you, Madam President, for putting this very important issue on the Council's agenda today. I want to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful words.

I also want to thank Mr. Prendergast. I was very interested in what he had to say about the three primary issues that need to be addressed, about how sanctions need to be extended to networks and about system change. As the Council considers some of the issues before it, I hope we will be able to follow some of his prescriptions and debate how we can more productively tackle corruption.

Corruption is pervasive. We agree with those who spoken so far that it causes and exacerbates conflict. But even more importantly, it is a major obstacle to economic growth and poverty alleviation. It is a subterranean current that perniciously undercuts efforts at peace, reconciliation and community rebuilding, and in many cases it causes those efforts to collapse.

From my own experience in Kabul, I know what it does to the willingness of individuals to go along with Governments trying to do the right thing when they see lower-level officials trying to shake them down for the most basic human services. Losses from corruption total some $1 trillion dollars a year. Corruption holds back economic development, it undermines the provision of public services and it stokes grievances and, ultimately, conflict. Kofi Annan, in 2003, called it an "insidious plague" (*A/58/PV.50, p. 12*).

The links between conflict and corruption are well established. We heard some examples of that today. In Syria, we have seen how a corrupt Government can generate grievances that lead to discontent and then to violence and then to conflict. In the Balkans, much ethnic tension has been fuelled by leaders not living up to their responsibilities. Studies of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Iraq, Nigeria and Afghanistan show how, once a conflict begins, it creates even more opportunities for bribery and other corrupt practices. That, in turn, undermines the rule of law, which fuels further conflict. Terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham or Al-Qaida, take advantage of corruption both to fund their operations and to attract recruits and promote their ideology.

No country is immune from corruption, and I include my own country. The fight against corruption therefore needs to begin in our capitals. I would like to highlight three steps that the United Kingdom has taken recently to strengthen our own defences. In 2017, we passed the Criminal Finances Act, which establishes new anti-corruption tools, such as unexplained wealth orders. This year, we announced that we would establish a public register listing the beneficial ownership of overseas companies, including in our overseas territories. That will help ensure that the United Kingdom is not used as a refuge by corrupt leaders, businessmen and officials. We have also established the National Economic Crime Centre, hosted by our National Crime Agency to task, and coordinate our overall law enforcement response.

But in today's interconnected world, as we have heard, it is vital that there be a properly coordinated international response. We are a very strong supporter of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and I would like to take this opportunity to urge all the countries that have not ratified the Convention to do so because it provides an excellent international framework to guide collective efforts. Fifteen years after its adoption by the General Assembly (resolution 58/4), we need to ensure that we maintain our momentum and focus on implementation and that the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly all ensure that their efforts in that regard are mutually reinforcing.

In 2016, we hosted an anti-corruption summit in London in the hope of stepping up global action. One of the most important outcomes of the summit, we believe, was the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre. It brings together specialist law-enforcement officers from six countries to trace the assets and individuals involved in cases of grand corruption.

Asset recovery is a critical part of efforts to tackle corruption and a fundamental principle of the Convention against Corruption. In 2017, we co-hosted the first Global Forum on Asset Recovery with the

United States, the World Bank and UNODC. The Forum helped to move forward arrangements for returning stolen assets of more than $300 million to Nigeria. The Convention, in chapter VI, highlights the importance of technical assistance and information exchange. The United Kingdom is proud to be working in partnership with several countries to share best practices and develop capacities. In Nigeria, we provide technical assistance and equipment to key agencies fighting international and domestic financial and economic crime, and we work to raise public awareness of corruption.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom will continue to support a concerted international response to end impunity for those engaged in corruption, to recover stolen assets and to empower citizens to stand up to and report corruption. That, in turn, will help prevent and resolve conflict. The United Nations has a crucial role to play in that response. We hope that all Member States will work together in order to get the better of corrupt leaders, businessmen and officials and ensure that there is no safe haven.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to thank the United States for having taken the initiative of convening this unprecedented meeting of the Security Council on the fight against corruption in conflict situations. We also warmly thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Mr. Prendergast for their illuminating briefings.

Corruption is both a consequence of instability and conflict and an important factor in exacerbating them. The Council is therefore the appropriate forum to address this issue, but we must do so in a pragmatic, operational and non-ideological manner.

In addition to significantly weakening institutions that safeguard the rule of law, corruption leads to drastic economic disparity and promotes organized crime and the financing of terrorism. It thereby undermines the security and the political, economic and social development of affected States. In that regard, it can be an obstacle to international peace and security, particularly in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, which often suffer a lack of institutions or weak institutions. Those countries, already vulnerable, are often the first victims of the ravages of corruption, which affects the stability of the State, the security of its citizens and the future of the country.

Beyond the threat it poses to peace, corruption is a major obstacle to development. Free of all ideology, France's pragmatic approach helps us to us see corruption as a threat to peace and development. It is an insidious evil that rots them both. Conversely, good governance — that is, a legal and institutional environment that promotes transparency and accountability — is a necessary condition for peacebuilding and development.

In that context, it is absolutely essential that the international community remain fully engaged in the fight against corruption at all levels — national, regional and international. Fifteen years after its adoption, the United Nations Convention against Corruption remains the only universal instrument and a pillar of the international fight against corruption. France reiterates its call for the strict implementation of the Convention by all States, in particular through its review mechanism, which helps to ensure the effective monitoring of the application of the Convention.

In that framework, each State has a responsibility and duty to act to put an end to corruption. Since we are here to share best practices, let me briefly share France's experience. We have considerably strengthened our anti-corruption powers by mobilizing public authorities, economic actors and civil society, who are closer to the field and promote innovative initiatives. To prevent and effectively fight corruption, non-State actors, who have essential expertise and links on the ground, play a major role. It is therefore important to implement joint strategies that bring together States, civil society and the private sector. That is the key to success.Those avenues are part and parcel of the assessment to which France was subjected this year as part of the second review cycle of the Convention against Corruption.

In order to effectively fight corruption, economic transparency is also essential. That is why in 2016 France adopted a law on transparency, the fight against corruption and the modernization of the economy. That law also created the French anti-corruption agency that is responsible for drawing up recommendations on the prevention of and assistance in detecting corruption for public and economic actors, as well as a national plan for the prevention of corruption. We encourage all States to establish robust national mechanisms to prevent and combat corruption.

Beyond the national level, regional and international organizations also have a central role to play in contributing to anti-corruption efforts and in supporting States that express a need for them. In

Europe, for example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Council of Europe have developed particularly relevant regional legal instruments. The Group of 20 also has an anti-corruption working group, which France is co-chairing with Argentina until the end of this year.

Finally, I would like to highlight the key role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the guarantor of the Convention against Corruption. The UNODC undertakes many anti-corruption activities, including the facilitation of the review mechanism and technical assistance activities — for example, training workshops for judges and prosecutors or assistance in the drafting of legislative documents — in order to help States implement their international obligations in that area. We encourage all Member States to support the important work of the UNODC in that regard.

Let me conclude by stressing the importance of international cooperation in the fight against corruption, in particular in order to learn from the best practices already in place. France thus fully supports the Open Government Partnership, which we co-chaired in 2016. That initiative, which seeks to increase the openness of public data and civic participation in public decision-making and is now comprised of more than 70 countries from all continents, is a formidable tool for preventing corruption risks. We hope that as many States as possible will join those efforts, and on behalf of France, I would like to once again make an appeal to that end.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank the United States presidency for the opportunity to discuss how corruption fuels conflicts. As for us, we stand for a system-wide coordination to improve the interlinkages between development and security, in particular in the regional context. It is from that angle that we see added value in scrutinizing that phenomenon as a consequence of conflict, with development drivers.

We express appreciation to Secretary-General Guterres and the founding Director of the Enough Project and co-founder of The Sentry, Mr. Prendergast, for their comprehensive and insightful briefings.

My delegation would like to make the following observations on some key points.

First, my country has its own experience in fighting various threats to peace and security at the national, regional and global levels. In that vein, we intend to make every effort to support our common commitment to preventing and controlling corruption so as to ensure peace. Transparency, the rule of law, good governance and accountability are the ways to root out corruption. That is true for pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict societies. Our experience shows that more engagement of countries in the international system of relations and transactions, rather than less, helps to avoid corruptive practices. Isolation plays the opposite role, fuelling negative tendencies in national and international development.

Secondly, today's world clearly testifies to the fact that there are interlinkages between development and security. We are confronted today by protracted conflicts with complex political instability and tensions that defy our interventions. To address them, we need to assess the alarming intensity and proportions assumed by problems such as terrorism, armed groups, transnational crime, the exploitation of natural resources and historical legacies and trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings, and to identify how corruption permeates all of them.

On the other hand, corruption is also triggered by insecurities caused by development-related root causes: deep poverty arising from climate change; food, water and energy insecurities; and large inflows of money for capacity-building and development aid. As such, in order to attain sustainable peace, including through engagement on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, we need to promote a threefold strategy by, inter alia, creating the potential for the close, complex, multifaceted and case-specific relationship between security and development, utilizing an innovative and revamped regional approach, and strengthening coordination within the United Nations to increase its effectiveness and ensure greater transparency and accountability.

Thirdly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies an explicit link between corruption and peaceful, just and inclusive societies. One of the most important commitments in the Agenda is to leave no one behind in the delivery of services, decision-making and the dispensation of justice. Achieving that ambitious goal will not be possible without tackling corruption in all its forms.

To conclude, my country firmly believes that the efforts of individual country have to be complemented by future actions conducted in unity. It is critically

important to build an environment of sustainable peace and resilient development for all. However, when we speak about the ways that the Security Council's sanction regimes and resolutions could lower the probability of conflict affected by corruption, we have to also bear in mind that the effect is yet to be thoroughly studied.

Lastly, we believe that the United Nations and its main organs have a crucial role to play in addressing that phenomenon, which triggers conflicts and impedes the post-conflict recovering process.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the United States presidency for holding this briefing on corruption and conflict. It also welcomes the presence of Secretary-General António Guterres, whose relevant analysis shed light on the acuity of corruption and its correlation with conflicts around the world. My delegation also thanks Mr. John Prendergast, founding Director of the Enough Project, for his briefing.

There is no doubt that corruption is one of the main causes of conflict, and it seems to be one of the most complex challenges facing our States. Corruption is morally and legally reprehensible and can create a fertile breeding ground for social unrest and give rise to new forms of violence, which can lead to conflicts that undermine the mechanisms for managing and distributing national wealth. When it reaches endemic proportions, corruption can undermine the foundations of a modern State that aspires to peace, development and shared prosperity through its impact on the values of transparency, integrity, morality and justice.

Corruption is a gangrene that is rotting State institutions by undermining their ability to carry out their sovereign functions and thereby represents a source of instability and conflict. In that regard, my delegation would like to focus its statement on administrative, judicial and security institutions, three areas that are emblematic of the challenges that corruption poses to States. Indeed, in many countries, corruption in administrative institutions has a negative impact on their effectiveness and fairness, in particular in how they serve their clients, which leads to frustrations that are factors in social conflicts. As a result, such institutions often lose all credibility in collective perceptions and thus struggle to establish themselves as places of civic equality.

Judicial institutions are equally susceptible, as they are supposed to guarantee the equality of citizens before the law, contribute to the control of democratic and economic governance, and ensure the implementation of accountability.

With regard to the corruption of security institutions, which are tools for protecting people and defending national territory, it represents a break in the pact of trust with civilians and another source of social tensions. Those institutions struggle to effectively control borders and to resolutely combat trafficking of all kinds, in particular drug trafficking and trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In the light of corruption's enormous potential for harm and its ability to undermine the foundations of States, in particular those in post-crisis situations, African leaders declared 2018 the African Anti-Corruption Year, with the theme: "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation". In doing so, they intend to demonstrate their collective commitment and determination to combating that scourge.

In that connection, the African Union Peace and Security Council, at its 764th meeting held on 12 April, stressed the need for greater integration of the African governance architecture within the framework of structural conflict prevention, while anchoring the African anti-corruption strategy within a global perspective. Indeed, as described earlier, corruption appears to be a major obstacle to good governance, may lead to large economic disparities, fuels organized crime and represents an obstacle to democracy. It therefore creates the conditions for destabilizing States, while endangering peace and security at the local, regional and international levels.

That is why, in the final statement of the thirty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union, held on 1 and 2 July in Nouakchott, emphasis was placed on strengthening South-South cooperation through the voluntary exchange of information, mutual legal assistance and the sharing of best practices among anti-corruption agencies; combating illicit financial flows through such measures as the provision of financial information on a country-by-country basis; and investment in demographic dividends through education and awareness campaigns for young people in the fight against corruption. Those measures require genuine ownership to be taken at the

local level in the fight against corruption, with a view to sharing experiences for greater effectiveness on the African continent.

We must also recall that the consequences of corruption are more pronounced in post-conflict countries, which are already affected by the absence or weakness of State institutions and the scarcity of financial resources. In that context, corruption can have destabilizing effects on the process of building and sustaining peace and even increases the likelihood of the resumption of hostilities. In order to break the vicious cycle that leads to increasingly inextricable situations in post-conflict countries, some practical measures could be considered to limit the corrosive effects of corruption on their stability and development. Those could include, among others, explicitly including the anti-corruption dimension in peace agreements; ensuring that anti-corruption interventions start in the immediate aftermath of conflict and take into account the context and relevant capacities existing in countries; strengthening collaboration with civil society and supporting its efforts to combat corruption.

As part of its peacebuilding strategy, and aware of the fact that corruption can be a potential factor in the resurgence of conflicts, Côte d'Ivoire has been working to strengthen its legislative and institutional framework to combat that scourge. On 16 April 2014, it set up the High Authority for Good Governance, which is responsible, among other tasks, for drawing up and implementing the national anti-corruption strategy, monitoring the implementation of prevention policies and the fight against corruption, and international cooperation in that field.

My country has also strengthened the capacity of its National Financial Information Processing Unit, which is responsible for combating illegal financial transactions and money-laundering. It has also updated and strengthened the texts governing the Central Public Procurement Department in order to make public procurement even more open and transparent. The pursuit of institutional reforms has also been marked by the expansion of the auditing powers of the Court of Auditors, in order to track and repress the embezzlement of public funds by high-ranking officials and to closely review the management of those funds. That institutional overhaul should make it possible to stem the loss of public funds and to pursue the establishment of a council of State and a court of appeal.

My country is deeply convinced that combating corruption is a matter of national, regional and international peace and security. We therefore support not only the preventive approach advocated by the Secretary-General, but also the need to promote international cooperation, including the sharing of experiences and good practices, in the fight against corruption.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. We listened to the statements made by Mr. Prendergast.

The maintenance of international peace and security is an important purpose of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council, as entrusted by the Charter. Nowadays, complex factors are at play throughout world, the emergence of regional hotspot issues is increasing, and traditional and non-traditional security challenges are intertwined. Against that background, the international community should act in concert to prevent and resolve conflicts in order to build long-lasting peace and universal security.

First, it is important to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and settle disputes by peaceful means. Sovereign equality, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States are the basic principles that guide international affairs. Countries must develop equal partnerships through consultation and mutual understanding. All parties to conflict must insist on consultations on an equal basis and resolve their differences through peaceful means, such as dialogue and negotiations. The mechanisms and means of addressing matters of international peace and security must be further refined in order to better resolve conflicts, defuse tensions and eliminate wars and conflicts.

Secondly, both the symptoms and the root causes of conflicts must be tackled. The international community should focus on addressing the root causes of conflict, such as poverty and underdevelopment, in an effort to comprehensively promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strengthen global development partnerships, honour assistance commitments and help developing countries improve the livelihood of their people, exploring development paths that suit their national conditions and helping them to enhance their own capabilities for development.

"We should promote development through peace and consolidate peace through development so that people in conflict areas can enjoy the peace dividends as soon as possible.

Thirdly, it is important to build a new international peace and security partnership featuring cooperation and win-win outcomes. All parties should establish a new vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and respond to challenges in the area of international peace and security in a mutually beneficial manner. The Security Council should play a central role in the collective security mechanism and work side by side and in a coordinated manner with the relevant United Nations agencies to establish synergies. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, enjoy advantages in terms of shared geography, history and culture, and should therefore play important roles in maintaining peace and security in the region.

China is a builder and defender of world peace and actively participates in United Nations peacekeeping operations and mediation activities related to international and regional hotspot issues, while advocating the settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiations. We firmly uphold the basic norms of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and promote international relations that are mutually respectful, fair, just and characterized by cooperation and win-win outcomes. The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was successfully held on 3 and 4 September. Leaders of China and Africa announced new measures to strengthen comprehensive cooperation between China and Africa around the theme "Towards an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future" through win-win cooperation. Eight major initiatives have been identified for the next three years and beyond.

In the area of peace and security, China has decided to establish a China-Africa peace and security cooperation fund to support peace and security and stability in Central Africa, while continuing to provide free military aid and assistance to the African Union. We support national and regional efforts, including in the regions of the Sahel, the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea, to maintain regional security and support counter-terrorism efforts.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has been established to provide a platform for China and Africa to strengthen exchanges in the area of peace and security. We are making efforts to promote the implementation of 50 security assistance projects, including the Belt and Road Initiative, social security, United Nations peacekeeping, combating piracy and counter-terrorism. Within the United Nations framework, we will continue to actively participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa and to mobilize the international community to strengthen support for the African Standby Force and build rapid-reaction forces to respond to crises. China will continue to work with the international community, adhere to multilateralism and support the United Nations in playing a central role in making greater contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Corruption is the common enemy of humankind. Substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms and strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets are included as targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The international community needs to strengthen cooperation, resolutely fight corruption and prevent gaps and loopholes that could be used to the benefit of corrupt actors. China is a party to the Convention against Corruption and actively participates in the relevant discussions in the General Assembly and other relevant mechanisms to support the United Nations role as the main cooperative channel to combat corruption. China stands ready to work with Governments and the relevant international agencies to continuously contribute to deepening international cooperation to counter corruption.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Prendergast for their briefings.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption stresses that corruption undermines the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice. Given those undermining effects, it is remarkable that the Security Council has never discussed corruption before. I therefore commend you, Madam President, for putting this issue on the agenda today.

In my intervention, I would like to focus on three aspects: the rule of law, accountability and sustainable development.

The rule of law forms the basis of stable societies, democracy and the trust that citizens place in their Government. If the rule of law is the medicine for stability, then corruption is the virus that breeds conflict. The report of the United Nations Development Programme, entitled *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, tells us how corrupt and ill-performing Governments push people into the hands of violent extremists, and Mr. Prendergast's organization has highlighted how actors engaged in illegal economic activities driven by corruption have an interest in perpetuating conflict. At the same time, reliable, corrupt-free Governments have proven to be a source of resilience. Let us therefore step up our efforts to strengthen the rule of law, build capacity and create strong State institutions that truly serve citizens.

This brings me to my second point — accountability. Accountable State institutions are strong State institutions. Accountability requires the separation of powers, checks and balances and judicial follow-up. I would like to thank Mr. Prendergast for his concrete suggestions in that regard, which are worth looking into. It requiresnot only the separation of powers, checks and balances and judicial follow-up; it also requires transparency. For that reason, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports Transparency International. The annual Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International shows that corruption and conflict correlate. It also shows that corruption diminishes when there are structures in place for citizens to hold their Government to account.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is worth mentioning as well. The EITI standard requires Governments to publish information on their natural resources management, including on where related tax money ends up. The EITI gives an informed voice to the people, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been a proud supporter of the Initiative since its inception because it is clear to us that internal oversight mechanisms, as well as external oversight mechanisms run by civil society, businesses and independent auditors, are key to holding State institutions to account.

Lastly, with regard to my third point, sustainable development, the sustaining peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are our most comprehensive responses to conflict prevention. Corruption, however, undermines their implementation. It deprives those who are most marginalized of access to vital services. Corruption diminishes tax revenues and fuels grievances and discontent. Corruption raises the cost of sustainable development. Tackling corruption is vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions. Tackling corruption is vital to sustainable development, and thus to global security.

In conclusion, today the Security Council has taken a first and important step to address corruption and its link to conflict. For the Council to take further steps, we call on the Secretary-General to highlight the issue more explicitly in his future reports and briefings. In his foreword to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime publication of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote that corruption "is found in all countries — big and small, rich and poor". Let the disruptive consequences of corruption that all our countries face unite us in our efforts to tackle that evil phenomenon once and for all.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his briefing earlier this morning and to Mr. John Prendergast for his account of how corruption affects societies and drives conflict and for his concrete recommendations to the Security Council.

The Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security, prevent conflicts and address their root causes makes the topic of corruption highly relevant to its work. We therefore welcome today's discussion, especially as it places significant emphasis on prevention and sustaining peace.

Corruption can be defined as the abuse of power and trust for private gain. It affects all countries, does not recognize boundaries and can spread through all levels of public agencies. Corruption cuts across entire populations but hits the most disempowered members of society the hardest. Women are often more at risk of suffering the consequences of corruption. That is because they tend to have weaker access to services and are also at higher risk for sexual extortion and physical abuse. We recognize how corruption contributes to the destabilization of fragile States and is ultimately one of the drivers of conflict. The recent United Nations and World Bank study *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*

also mentions corruption as an underlying source for conflict and violence. In contrast, when people trust their service providers, institutions, Governments and elected officials, the path to stable societies is firmer. Knowing that everyone is treated equally gives the most disempowered in particular a sense of belonging and security, while offering better opportunities to end the cycles of violence that are the result of political exclusion.

Our multilateral efforts have produced strong political commitments to supporting anti-corruption initiatives. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 16, on stronger institutions, and Goal 10, on reducing inequality within and among countries, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the United Nations Convention against Corruption are important foundations for those commitments. The peacebuilding and sustaining peace agendas of the United Nations are also directly relevant to the fight against corruption. Resolution 2282 (2016), on sustaining peace, stresses the importance of strengthening the rule of law and promoting accountability, good governance and gender equality. It also highlights the need to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Addressing corruption is part and parcel of honouring those commitments.

Anti-corruption efforts are a high priority for my country at home, at the muitilateral level and through our development cooperation. We support increased democratic participation, which requires strong and independent judicial systems, political institutions and free media. That in turn reinforces transparency and accountability, thereby making the abuse of power more difficult. We also support partner countries in their fight against corruption by strengthening institutions such as tax and audit authorities. For example, we organized the Stockholm Tax Conference, held in May, to promote capacity-building in the area of taxation. Efficient, transparent and effective tax administration supports poverty reduction and equality and is closely linked to the fight against corruption.

Every day in the Council we see the devastating effects that conflicts have on countries by undermining institutions and the rule of law, thereby creating more avenues for corruption. It is crucial to keep that aspect in mind when we plan for United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Work against corruption must be clearly included in mandates and in the support we provide to capacity-building and the reform of rule-of-law institutions. Mr. Prendergast has put forward additional ideas, including on how we could improve sanctions policies, which we believe are well worth considering and are very much in line with the work we have started in order to ensure that sanctions instruments become more efficient.

It is also important to ensure that the support that the United Nations provides to Member States in their anti-corruptions efforts is coherent. Missions, United Nations country teams and United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, must all work together. We must also continue to support models for international cooperation among practitioners, prosecutors and law enforcement. Not only does anti-corruption work address the crippling effects of corruption on societies, economies and lives, it is first and foremost about prevention. If we can build effective, accountable and inclusive public institutions and provide access to justice for all, we decrease the risk of a society sliding or relapsing into conflict. It is for that reason that corruption is and should remain part of the Council's agenda in the broader context of prevention and sustaining peace.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for the information he provided and his assessment of the threat of corruption in situations of conflict. We also thank Mr. Prendergast for his briefing.

Yes, conflicts do provide scope for profit and many people do indeed profit from them. We should not forget, however, that many conflicts are provoked by struggles, both concealed and open, over natural resources. And this is about external and well as internal players. Nowhere is that more evident than in Africa, where the thought of its undeveloped natural resources gives many no rest. We could term that the reverse side of corruption.

As the Secretary-General rightly said today, corruption is a feature of both rich and poor countries. It also exists in the United States, which lectured us about corruption today. It exists there in its traditional forms, but it is frequently disguised through unique institutions such as legalized lobbying. So if people want to discuss the subject in the Security Council, it would be more logical for them to start at home, and specifically with lobbying, which envelops the highest levels of power in the United States and is dictated by

the interests of numerous private military companies, whose commercial interests are inextricably entwined with those of the powerful defence lobby in the Capitol.

For the Council's information, the cause of the conflict in Ukraine was not Yanukovych's corruption but a coup d'état that exchanged one corrupt regime for another, which, unlike that of Yanukovych, has actually waged war on its own people. There are members of the Council who are well aware of the scale of the corruption in Ukraine because those people are their protégés. And it is that corruption, including in the military, that is fuelling the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine.

The Russian delegation has consistently advocated strengthening the central coordinating role of the United Nations in uniting the international community's efforts to prevent corruption and combat such scourges. In our view, the United Nations Convention against Corruption is a robust international legal framework for developing international cooperation in this area. Russia was one of the first countries to sign the Convention, in December 2003, and to ratify it, in March 2006. In 2015, the sixth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention was held in Saint Petersburg. We pay particular attention to the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention, which we consider unique, open, transparent and unpoliticized, and which functions as an intergovernmental process based on respect for the principles of the equality and sovereignty of States and of non-intervention in domestic affairs.

We support strengthening the role of the United Nations and of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in providing expert assistance to States in their efforts to effectively implement the provisions of this critical Convention, and in UNODC's efforts to ensure its universalization. Russia is a major donor to UNODC's anti-corruption projects, including a number of joint initiatives such as the annual preparatory courses for contacts and Government experts participating in the review of the Convention's implementation. In 2017, Russia provided financial support for the operations of the United Nations Convention against Corruption Legal Library and the Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge web portal. In June in Vienna, on the eve of the World Cup, together with UNODC and with support from the BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, we held an international conference on preventing corruption in sports. As we know, intergovernmental open-ended working groups have been established in the framework of the Convention to review measures on preventing corruption, ensuring the restitution of assets and bringing together experts on international cooperation. All these formats are open, intergovernmental and technical in nature.

There are still gaps and inconsistencies in States' legal norms with regard to the restitution of criminally derived assets. In that connection, the Russian Federation has consistently supported the development of a corresponding multilateral international legal mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations, which would help to eliminate vague areas and would help to strengthen the coordination of the relevant bodies in supplying mutual legal assistance on criminal matters and extraditions, and in countering money-laundering.

As is blindingly clear, unpoliticized mechanisms for anti-corruption have been functioning effectively and are being developed at the United Nations. In that connection, we do not support initiatives aimed at enshrining the topic as some kind of so-called new challenge to international peace and security and thus making use of the forum and mechanisms of the Security Council in that context. That can only undermine the existing formats and would damage the practical cooperation of the relevant State agencies based on the United Nations Convention against Corruption. We believe that the distribution of labour that exists in the United Nations enables us to productively tackle the challenges in the area of anti-corruption activity, and that changing it, especially to the detriment of the authority of the United Nations, is counterproductive. There are no objective reasons for it. For our part, we will continue to assist the specialized bodies and mechanisms of international cooperation in this area and in adapting them to reflect the evolution of existing threats.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Prendergast for their important briefings.

Peru attaches high priority to the issue that brings us together. Our country has not been spared the scourge of the corruption that affects our hemisphere. The problem manifests itself in different forms in every region of the world, and in the numerous conflicts that make up the Security Council's agenda. Corruption

erodes citizens' belief and trust in their authorities and institutions. It undermines ethical values, the rule of law, justice and democratic governance. It is one of the greatest obstacles to effectively addressing the needs and development of our peoples.

The transnational scope and multiple forms of corruption and organized crime should compel us to commit to strengthening international cooperation and multilateralism in order to respond consistently to the challenges that are shared by all our countries. That includes the work of the Council, given that according to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, this scourge represents a threat to the stability and security of societies. It is clear that corruption is a root cause of many conflicts and humanitarian crises, and it is often associated with organized crime, which in turn manifests itself as a financial backer and enabler of violence and terrorism through activities such as money-laundering and the illicit arms trade. In that regard, we would like to recall the Council's presidential statement of 8 May (S/PRST/2018/9), which commits us to deepening investigations in order to better understand the nature and scope of the links between terrorists and transnational organized crime. Peru attaches high priority to the fight against corruption and organized crime, in line with the Convention against Corruption and with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, among other things, commits us to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and to strengthening the rule of law.

We emphasize that sustaining peace, defined as a general objective and a permanent process in identical resolutions recently reaffirmed by the General Assembly and the Council (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016)), duly commits us to consolidating inclusive, transparent and accountable national institutions.

An effective fight against corruption requires a culture of integrity and of constitutional provisions that guarantee checks and balances on the exercise of power. That includes full access to justice to ensure that there is no impunity and greater participation by women and young people in political and institutional life. The citizenry must be able to know about the accusations in cases of corruption in a timely manner and participate, in an informed manner, in political life.

We are also believe that the scope of corruption demands a coordinated response from Governments. That is why, at the eighth Summit of the Americas, held in Lima in April, Peru promoted the adoption of the Lima Commitment, which includes 57 measures and concrete actions in support of the fight against corruption and regional cooperation in that area. We are currently working on its implementation.

In line with the need to prevent corruption from degenerating into conflicts and humanitarian crises, we consider it essential that the international community have at its disposal mechanisms for early warning and exchanging good practices. We therefore consider it important to consider extending Council sanctions regimes to corruption and money-laundering networks that benefit from conflicts, as Mr. Prendergast has proposed.

Finally, with a view to strengthening national institutions called on to sustain peace, we consider it important to ensure that the fight against corruption and respect for fundamental freedoms are reflected in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and other missions mandated by the Council in countries affected by conflict, as appropriate.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Prendergast for their briefings. We have listened carefully to both and we agree that corruption erodes the economy, weakens Government institutions and enables other, related crimes, such as money-laundering and international transfers of illegally derived funds, often used to finance mechanisms in support of terrorist activities. Similarly, corruption undermines the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, regarding the building of robust institutions, a challenge from which no State is exempt.

However, the fact that corruption affects all States to varying degrees does not indicate that it constitutes a threat to international peace and security per se. In many cases, corruption derives from weak institutions due to a lack of economic resources or regions with armed conflict. It can also emerge where there is a lack of State presence as a product of the key causes of conflicts. We therefore believe that corruption is fundamentally an issue that falls under the functions and powers of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Organization. Those powers are set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and the Security Council is duty-bound to respect that and to confine itself to

matters that constitute threats to international peace and security.

The Security Council must identify threats to international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, as stipulated in Article 24, paragraph 2. The Council must also comply with the Charter and with international law both in its decisions and in its actions. The interference of the Security Council in the functions and powers of other organs of the United Nations is a distortion of the purposes and principles of the Charter, undermines the authority of those organs and violates the rights of all Member States.

Including corruption as a threat to international peace and security in the Council's agenda does not give any added value and leads only to greater politicization of the issue and heightened disagreement among States. In that regard, Bolivia emphasizes that the Security Council's decision to hold this informative briefing should not be considered a precedent and should not lead to undermining the authority or mandate of the competent bodies in which the entire membership participates or to the exploitation of this meeting for ideological reasons. Likewise, it should neither lead to the undermining of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States by using the Security Council under the pretext of fighting corruption for international peace and security, nor should it be used for ideological reasons, as we said before. By the same token, it should not be used as an excuse to undercut legitimate and democratic Governments or to encourage policies of regime change.

The Council should set an example of defending and promoting the rule of law, respecting the sovereign equality of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the domestic jurisdiction of any State. Selective application and politicization of rules that aggravate conflicts and weaken the credibility and authority of the Security Council, and thus the United Nations system, should be avoided.

The United Nations, and the international community in general, should cooperate with Member States in the creation and strengthening of their institutions and the rule of law, assuming responsibility themselves for fighting corruption, and I repeat, doing that in strict respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States.

In Bolivia, President Evo Morales Ayma, together with other authorities of the country, decided voluntarily and for the first time in the history of Bolivia, to renounce banking secrecy for the sake of transparency — an example that should be replicated throughout the world.

Moreover, at the international level, this year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which enjoys broad international consensus and has served as an international framework for cooperation to strengthen prevention and mitigate the risks of corruption. At the regional level, the member States of the Organization of American States adopted the Lima Commitment to tackle systemic corruption. Bolivia adhered to those documents, as well as to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. There are also initiatives against corruption in the framework of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Union of South American Nations.

However, rules and regulations are not everything. A strong political commitment to fight such a phenomenon and take concrete actions to eliminate that evil is needed. In that regard, it is necessary to work on the elimination of tax havens, as well as to design, adopt and implement measures to supervise and control transnational corporations, which undermine the sovereignty of States and in many cases encourage corruption and the violation of human rights. As Mr. Prendergast mentioned, the financial system is used through those tax havens and banking secrecy, and in conjunction with transnational corporations, to launder money from criminal activities, including corruption and the plundering of natural resources, which is used, inter alia, to finance conflicts. That is why we must fight corruption worldwide — first and foremost within the global financial system.

In conclusion, we emphasize our conviction that the promotion of the rule of law at the international level is fundamental to make a reality a fairer world and Organization that can deal with the phenomenon of corruption effectively and in respect for the sovereignty of all States.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for holding this important meeting and for the concept note. We also appreciate the briefing by the Secretary-General and that of Mr. John Prendergast, whom we

thank for his thoughts and proposals about targeted sanctions. We believe that there is a need to further look into them. The Security Council managed previously to move from general sanctions to targeted and smart sanctions. However, we believe that it is high time to evaluate that experience more thoroughly.

I will cover three main aspects in my statement: first, the causes and repercussions of corruption; secondly, the role of the United Nations in fighting corruption and in international cooperation; and, thirdly, the steps taken by the State of Kuwait to fight corruption.

First, with respect to the causes and repercussions of corruption, we know that our world today is suffering from the spread of corruption to varying degrees. The Secretary-General mentioned some facts and figures that stress that point, especially in areas that suffer from political or security turmoil. Corruption does not exist in a vacuum. There are underlying economic and social causes, such as poverty, oppression, inequality, violations of human rights and a decline in levels of social justice, as well as the absence of the rule of law. All those create fertile ground for the proliferation of corruption.

The increase in the levels of corruption in societies negatively impacts the national security of countries, similar to terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime. Many examples and conflicts have proven that there is a close link between the spread of corruption and the intensity of conflicts. Corruption increases as conflicts become more intense, which is why conflicts become prolonged. The risk of corruption is not limited to one country alone, but rather it threatens regional and international security. The spread of corruption deepens human misery, injustice and the misuse and waste of public and private resources. Corruption can destroy the economies of countries by diminishing economic growth, slowing development and increasing unemployment and poverty.

Secondly, with regard to the role of the United Nations in fighting corruption, as well as in international cooperation, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted by the General Assembly in 2003, is considered a solid legal framework that includes a set of norms, measures and rules that should be implemented by all parties to the Convention in order to promote its legal and regulatory systems to fight corruption. If implemented, it will reduce the incidence of corruption, especially since the Convention further states that the United Nations would provide assistance to Member States for capacity-building and the implementation of programmes that promote transparency, integrity, accountability and the rule of law. We therefore urge Governments, the private sector and civil society to take a collective stand against that phenomenon so that we can attain a just and more prosperous future for all.

In that regard, we underscore the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination with regional and international entities in order to promote measures to fight corruption. We must establish regional networks to fight corruption, strengthen cooperation, share expertise and work towards the implementation of United Nations conventions in several areas, such as in the areas of extradition and exchange of information. As the Secretary-General mentioned in his briefing, corruption exists in all countries — large and small, rich and poor, North and South.

Thirdly, in 2016, the State of Kuwait established an anti-corruption authority to fulfil our obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption. I will mention briefly some of the objectives that the authority aims to achieve, namely, promote the principles of transparency and integrity in economic and administrative transactions; implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and other international conventions and treaties on fighting corruption; work on fighting corruption, reduce its threats and repercussions and prosecute its perpetrators; seize and restore assets and proceeds from corruption, in accordance with the law; protect State institutions from bribery, trading in influence and the misuse of power; protect whistle-blowers about corruption; promote the principle of cooperation and participation with countries and regional and international organizations; and encourage and operationalize the role of civil society institutions and organizations to fight corruption and increase society's awareness of its risks.

In conclusion, we stress that the issue of fighting and eliminating corruption is a common responsibility that starts with the individual in particular and the State in general. Corruption is a tool that allows its perpetrators to achieve their purpose quickly, illicitly and illegally. We can put an end to such a phenomenon by educating societies and providing a decent life and equality to all, and by Governments implementing international conventions and treaties pertaining to this

issue, while above all strengthening and applying the rule of law without discrimination.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): As I take the floor on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea at this important debate, I would first like to congratulate the United States Mission and Ambassador Nikki Haley for including the important issue of corruption on the agenda of the Security Council for the first time. Today's debate is taking place one day after Africa Day, on 9 September, which was celebrated under the theme "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation". I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and Mr. Prendergast for their insightful briefings, which greatly enrich today's debate.

If we understand corruption as the act of corrupting someone or allowing oneself to be corrupted, misusing one's official position to obtain or grant an illegitimate advantage, then we can say that corruption is a form of moral turpitude and that its sphere of influence pervades all layers, especially the civil service but also the private business sector. Obviously, the term "corrupt" implies a diversion of services or the results thereof, which are generally economic, to other illegitimate recipients, which constitutes misappropriation. Therefore, in one way or another, it is covered by Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Influence peddling, bribery, extortion and fraud are some of the corrupt practices that are reflected in actions such as giving money to public officials in exchange for a service or the omission of their official responsibility. Unfortunately, we are facing a scourge that does not differentiate among States; it is found in developed and developing countries alike. While there may be more cases in some countries than in others, it is a shared problem and concern for all nations of the world — so much so that international cooperation and the exchange of experiences and strategies in that area are of global interest.

Although it is not their only source of financing, the mafias, terrorists, criminal networks and mercenaries, in satisfying their different ambitions, also resort to extorting and corrupting certain officials in order to obtain public goods and services, which leads to war, public disorder, waste and so forth, with the ultimate objective, in most cases, of seizing the countries' political or economic power, in particular their natural resources. My country, Equatorial Guinea, has fallen victim several times to those types of attempts, the most recent of which took place in December.

As far as the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is concerned, not only does the law on civil servants of the central administration of the State prohibit and penalize, including with separation from service, officials who engage in those types of practices, but also, on 5 February 2004, a decree was enacted that put into effect the law on ethics and dignity in the exercise of public functions. In our view, if civil servants maintain high moral and ethical values, it will be harder for them to lower themselves to committing crimes, such as corruption, which are totally contrary to their code of ethics.

Aware of the relevance of that issue and the great damage it causes for society throughout the world, His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and the Government have on several occasions publicly condemned that practice and taken appropriate actions and urged the country's legislature to develop every possible legal instruments aimed at combating corruption.

I must also point out that our national development plan, known as Horizon 2020, includes as one of its main objectives the achievement of good governance, which obviously includes supporting measures such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty reduction. It is hoped that, in attaining the Goals, it will be harder to justify misleading or derailing certain public servants. However, many researchers have agreed that improving working conditions is among the aspects that need to be reviewed to reduce the impact of the problem. Therefore, we encourage the international community to ensure that each country takes all possible measures to ensure good governance and thereby improve the standard of living of its people in order to reduce the tendency towards corruption.

In the area of peacebuilding, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has contributed to the best of its ability by always providing human and financial resources in the subregion of Central Africa and on the African continent in general. In order for the international community to succeed in this area, States must get involved by improving their domestic legislation to allow them to tackle this universal scourge and enhance cooperation. In that regard, I take this opportunity to commend the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime on its work and the great effort it has undertaken so far in several States to eradicate corruption with a view to reducing the serious conflicts that simmer and persist in those countries. Consequently, for the purpose of preventing conflicts fuelled by corruption in all their manifestations, it is the duty of States to cooperate with the competent international organizations and to take preventive measures to reduce this practice, which is becoming systemic in many societies.

Unfortunately, transnational corporations, backed by some powerful countries and with many financial resources, in order to achieve their objectives of maximum profits, sometimes corrupt officials, especially from the poorest countries, with a view to obtaining large profits by working outside the legally established rules. Therefore, there is also a moral duty to be borne by corporate actors and their backers to comply with the law of the countries where they operate and submit to the rule of law and avoid impunity, another source of social unrest, and therefore a possible cause of conflict.

In accordance with the position of the African Union, we urge States in conflict to strengthen their public institutions, transparency and accountability for the perpetrators of corrupt acts that strengthen armed groups and facilitate the trafficking in arms, drugs and persons for personal gain and who destabilize society as a whole. These actions are essential in order to achieve the noble goal of silencing the weapons and putting an end to all wars on our continent as soon as possible.

We believe that the mandates of peacekeeping, peacebuilding and political missions must include measures and strategies that allow them greater access to international financial information pertaining to the parties to a conflict in order to reduce corruption, which influences the length of a conflict and, for each specific case, a specific formula for the control and monitoring of funds on the ground, necessary expenditures and payments that have actually been made, thereby ensuring an exhaustive and impartial accounting.

Let me conclude my statement by quoting Argentine journalist Hugo Alconada Mon, who stated in his book *The Root of All Evil*: "Corruption is like tango; it takes two to dance."

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to congratulate the presidency of the Security Council for taking the initiative of convening today's briefing. Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. John Prendergast for their very informative briefings.

One might say that corruption is an internal problem of a country, but it is not. The fact is that corruption undermines governmental institutions and weakens judiciary systems and countries' economies. It also undermines armies' ability to stand up to terrorist groups, especially in countries in which soldiers are not well paid or fully equipped. In an environment of low morale, corruption can thrive. It provides terrorists with access to financing and weapons and undermines the rule of law, good governance and human rights. Widespread and systematic corruption is one of the root causes of many conflicts that may constitute a threat to international peace and security.

Corruption is also one of the major structural obstacles to successful post-conflict reconstruction in its negative impact on the three foundational pillars of the United Nations system, namely, peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. It all leads to one conclusion: corruption is not confined to national borders. The Security Council cannot turn a blind eye to corruption and terrorism that have joined forces in conflict-affected countries. However, we have to bear in mind that it is both a factor and a consequence of the present security challenges we face. I would like to share with the Council a few ideas that, in our opinion, could contribute to addressing the problem.

First, we should veer towards a policy of financial pressure aimed at reforms. Donors should send a clear message that they are willing to stop funding or reject projects if the Government in question fails to include safeguards to prevent corruption. The scope of Security Council sanctions should be expanded when deemed necessary. By targeting multiple actors at the same time, there is a chance of having greater impact.

Secondly, with regard to good governance and transparency, Poland considers the fight against corruption as a cornerstone of modern democratic societies. Member States and international institutions should support long-term democratic and transparency processes and governance reform. Capacity-building programmes in all sectors need to be re-evaluated so that they no longer bolster existing corrupt institutions. We all know that, without political will, no reform can bring about the desired effects. Globally, we call for the universal adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and close cooperation

among institutions dealing with corruption, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Council of Europe and the European Union. We also see civil society as an essential partner in this area.

For many years, Poland has advocated at the Human Rights Council for the adoption of a draft resolution on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights focused, inter alia, on the fight against corruption. Poland has also been successful in developing cooperation with interested countries that have implemented at the local and regional levels measures contributing to reducing corruption in the governmental sector. We also provide training in which we share anti-money-laundering practices and counter-terrorist financing measures.

Lastly, we call for enacting anti-money laundering measures when needed. Bodies like the Financial Action Task Force have developed international standards to combat money laundering, and countries should use that toolbox of measures and implement them at the national level. If such measures were implemented effectively by countries, their implementation could create an environment in which corruption, terrorist financing and money laundering would fail to go unnoticed.

In conclusion, Poland is fully committed to reducing corruption. It is disruptive to people's lives and countries, and not a single one is immune to corruption. As reducing levels of corruption is one of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it makes it an even more challenging and ambitious objective, and we should all strive towards achieving it.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing on the topic of our discussion today. We also are grateful to Mr. Prendergast for his remarks.

We all recognize the negative effects of corruption on the political, economic and sociocultural stability of societies. It undermines accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs, and it is inimical to socioeconomic development. As stated in the preamble of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, it can also pose a threat to the stability and security of societies, while undermining the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law. While recognizing that fact, we do not believe that this is an issue within the purview of the Security Council. Based on the principle of complementarity, the Council should be able to allow other relevant organs to handle such cross-cutting issues.

Of course, there is nothing that precludes the Council from considering corruption in the context of conflict-specific situations, and we understand that that has been the case so far. Within the framework of the various relevant sanctions regimes, the Council has been taking measures to address the embezzlement of public resources. In that regard, a number of cases can be cited in which the Council took decisions to ban trade in charcoal, oil and minerals. In terms of the fight against terrorism, the Council also has adopted important resolutions for countering the financing of terrorism. The Council should continue to use such tools where appropriate in mitigating the negative impact of corruption in instigating and fuelling conflicts and violence. Nevertheless, even in the context of conflict-specific situations, corruption cannot be looked at in isolation, as it cannot be the only factor, but a manifestation of many other serious political and socioeconomic challenges contributing to instability and conflict. That is why sanctions cannot be the only tools for addressing the threats posed by corruption.

There has to be a comprehensive and long-term strategy aimed at tackling the root causes of conflict, among which corruption could be one of them. That cannot be done without ensuring good governance, strengthening State institutions and promoting accountability and transparency, as well as ensuring the rule of law. Neither is the fight against corruption something that should be left to Government alone; it requires the active participation and engagement of all segments of society, including women, young people, the media and the private sector. It is because of that broader scope and dimension that we believe that corruption should be dealt with by other relevant United Nations organs. The United Nations Convention against Corruption is the only legally binding anti-corruption instrument that provides a comprehensive response, and the vast majority of us are State parties to the Convention. In that regard, we recognize the work by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in providing technical assistance to Member States in various corruption-related thematic areas, such as prevention, education, asset recovery and integrity in the criminal justice system, among others.

We in Africa have been facing serious challenges as a result of corruption that are hampering efforts aimed

at promoting democratic governance, socioeconomic transformation, peace and security and the enjoyment of human rights. The High-pevel Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, chaired by President Thabo Mbeki, highlighted the magnitude of the problem in its report submitted to the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in February 2015. The report found that, on average, African countries lose $50 billion every year — with a potential of rising to $148 billion — through illicit financial flows. Also according to the report, corrupt practices play a key role in facilitating those outflows.

That is why the African Union declared 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption year to curb corruption, which is considered as a major societal flaw causing setbacks in the socioeconomic and political development of the continent. The feeling by our leaders is that, if corruption is not dealt with as a matter of priority, Africa cannot make meaningful progress towards achieving its Agenda 2063 and the 2030 global plan for sustainable development, and neither can it succeed in its efforts towards silencing the guns.

At the level of the African Union, we also have in place the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, along with other legal instruments aimed at fostering a culture of democracy and ensuring good governance and the rule of law. We believe that greater cooperation and collaboration among the relevant bodies of the United Nations and the African Union and its regional mechanisms in the fight against corruption is something that needs to be encouraged.

The meeting rose at noon.